

CLAIMS

1 1. A method of tracking and compensating for changes in a dense wavelength division
2 multiplexing (DWDM) network, comprising
3
4 employing a dither feedback mechanism which uses optical filters that are already part
5 of the network for add/drop functions; and
6
7 dithering the optical filter bandpass about the center wavelength of each channel in use
8 to obtain a measurement of the optical transfer function (OTF) in the network at any
9 instant in real-time;
10
11 wherein, when the network configuration is changed by adding or dropping
12 wavelengths, the resulting change in the OTF can be tracked and feedback signals are
13 used to compensate for the change.

1 2. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the feedback mechanism is based on a
2 wavelength locked loop and allows a spectral decomposition (optical power vs.
3 wavelength) with very fast response corrections and hence enables the use of networks
4 with more wavelengths spaced more closely together at a specified bit-error rate
5 (BER).

1 3. A method of adjusting for changes in optical signals transmitted through an optical
2 network, comprising:
3
4 transmitting a set of optical signals through a network, each of the optical signals
5 having a respective wavelength;
6

7 tracking changes to said set of signals by passing each of the signals through a filter
8 having a bandpass function, and dithering the filter bandpass about the wavelengths of
9 each of said set of signals to generate filter output signals; and
10
11 using the filter output signals to adjust the network or the set of optical signals to
12 compensate for said changes.

1 4. A method according to Claim 3, for use with an optical control monitor having a
2 filter for adding or dropping optical signals from the network, and wherein the passing
3 step includes the step of passing at least some of the optical signals through the filter
4 of the optical control monitor.

1 5. A method according to Claim 3, further comprising the step of dropping optical
2 signals from the network, and wherein the step of using the filter output signals
3 includes the step of adjusting the set of optical signals or the network to compensate
4 for the dropping of optical signals from the network.

1 6. A method according to Claim 3, further comprising the step of adding optical
2 signals to the network, and wherein the step of using the filter output signals includes
3 the step of adjusting the set of optical signals or the network to compensate for the
4 adding of optical signals to the network.

1 7. A method according to Claim 3, wherein each of the filter output signals represents
2 the difference between a passband wavelength of the filter and the wavelength of a
3 respective one of the signals passed through the filter.

1 8. A method according to Claim 3, wherein the using step includes the steps of:
2
3 using the filter output signals to generate a power density signal representing the
4 spectral power density of said set of optical signals; and

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6 using the power density signal to adjust said spectral power density in response to
7 changes in said power density.

1 9. A method according to Claim 3, wherein the using step includes the steps of:

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3 processing said filter output signals to generate a further signal representing changes
4 in the optical spectrum of said set of optical signals; and

5

6 using said further signal to adjust the optical network or the set of optical signals to
7 compensate for said changes in the optical spectrum.

1 10. A method according to Claim 9, further comprising the step of

2 dithering at least one of the optical signals at a given rate; and wherein the processing
3 step includes the steps of:

4

5 generating a dither signal at said given rate, and

6

7 mixing the dither signal with at least one of the filter output signals.

1 11. An optical control monitor comprising:

2

3 a receiver for receiving a set of optical signals, each of the optical signals having a
4 respective wavelength; and

5

6 a tracking circuit to track changes to said set of signals, including

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8 i) a filter having a bandpass function,

9

10 ii) means to pass said set of optical signals through the filter, wherein the wavelengths
11 of the optical signals are dithered relative to the filter bandpass to generate filter
12 output signals, and
13
14 iii) a control for using the filter output signals to make a defined adjustment to
15 compensate for said changes.

1 12. An optical control monitor according to Claim 11, for use with an optical
2 network, and wherein the filter is adapted to add or drop optical signals from the
3 network.

1 13. An optical control monitor according to Claim 12, wherein the control makes said
2 adjustment to compensate for the dropping of optical signals from the network.

1 14. An optical control monitor according to Claim 12, wherein the control makes said
2 adjustment to compensate for the adding of optical signals to the network.

1 15. An optical control monitor according to Claim 11, wherein each of the filter
2 output signals represents the difference between a passband wavelength of the filter
3 and the wavelength of a respective one of the signals passed through the filter.

1 16. An optical control monitor according to Claim 11, wherein the control includes:
2
3 means to use the filter output signals to generate a power density signal representing
4 the spectral power density of said set of optical signals; and
5 means to use the power density signal to make the defined adjustment in response to
6 changes in said power density.

1 17. An optical control monitor according to Claim 11, wherein the control includes;
2

3 a dither source for generating a dither signal; and

4

5 a mixer for mixing the dither signal with at least one of the filter output signals.

1 18. A combination add unit and drop unit for an optical network, the combination
2 comprising:

3

4 an add unit comprising means for transmitting a set of optical signal, each of the
5 optical signals having a respective wavelength; and a first dither source for dithering at
6 least one of the optical signals; and

7

8 a drop unit comprising a receiver for receiving the set of optical signals; and a tracking
9 circuit to track changes to said set of signals, the tracking circuit including

10

11 a filter having a bandpass function,

12

13 means to pass said set of optical signals through the filter, wherein the wavelengths of
14 the optical signals are dithered relative to the filter bandpass, to generate filter output
15 signals, and

16

17 a control for using the filter output signals to make a defined adjustment to
18 compensate for said changes.

1 19. A combination add unit and drop unit according to Claim 18, wherein the control
2 includes:

3 a second dither source for generating a dither signal; and

4

5 a mixer for mixing the dither signal with the at least one of the filter output signals.

1 20. A combination according to Claim 19, wherein:

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3 the first dither source dithers said at least one of the optical signals at a given rate; and

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5 the second dither source dithers the dither signal at said given rate.

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